LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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Dry Weather Persists

Lake Levels Continue Downward Trend

All of the Great Lakes except Superior experienced a greater than average decline in their water levels during December, continuing the trend of the past several months. For the fourth consecutive month, precipitation was below average over the drainage basins of Lakes Erie and Ontario, and a new record low water level for December was set at Montreal harbour for the second consecutive month.

The annual water supply to Lake Superior during 1998 (runoff to the lake plus precipitation on the lake minus evaporation from the lake) was a new record low for this century. At the beginning of January, Lake Superior was 23 cm below average.

The water supply to Lakes Michigan and Huron for the period April to December was also a new record low. During December, the water level of these lakes was below average for the first month since October 1995. At the beginning of January, Lake Huron's level was eight cm below average, while Lakes St. Clair and Erie were within two cm of their average levels.

Lake Ontario's level continued to decline in December, and it is now 28 cm below average. It is anticipated that the lake's level is very close to its low point for this winter and will not decline much further.

Public Hearings

The International Joint Commission has scheduled public hearings to receive comment on the proposed Peace Bridge capacity expansion project and on the proposed redevelopment and expansion of Ontario Hydro's water diversion facilities in the Niagara River. The times and locations of hearings are as follows: January 27, 1999 at the Marriott Hotel 6740 Oakes Drive Niagara Falls, Ontario and January 28 at the Buffalo-Niagara Marriott 1340 Millersport Highway Amherst, NY. Both sessions will be 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. For further information contact Fabien Lengellé at 613-995-0088.

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December Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term December average:

Great Lakes Basin	77%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	65%
Lake Superior	100%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	83%
Lake Ontario	61%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

December Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of

the long-term December average:

Lake Superior	75%
Lake Erie	101%
Lake Huron	102%
Lake Ontario	96%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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